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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted at Howard Community College (HCC) to determine the performance of HCC students at transfer institutions. Four factors related to transfer success were examined: earning an associate degree at HCC; enrolling in a community college transfer program; length of time spent at HCC; and academic preparation and achievement at the time of community college entry. Data provided by the Maryland State Board for Community Colleges, the Maryland State College Information Center, and state colleges and universities revealed: (1) increasing numbers of students were transferring from HCC to Maryland public four-year institutions, despite the fact that the number of community college transfer students throughout the state had decreased; (2) at the University of Maryland, HCC transfer students as a group, examined over a period of years, performed almost as well as the overall student population; (3) HCC graduates were more academically successful than non-graduates at the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP); (4) students transferring to UMCP with 50 or more credits from HCC were more successful than those who transferred with fewer credits; and (5) the highest grade point averages for HCC students were found at the University of Baltimore. (HB)

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# ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS IN TRANSFER INSTITUTIONS: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

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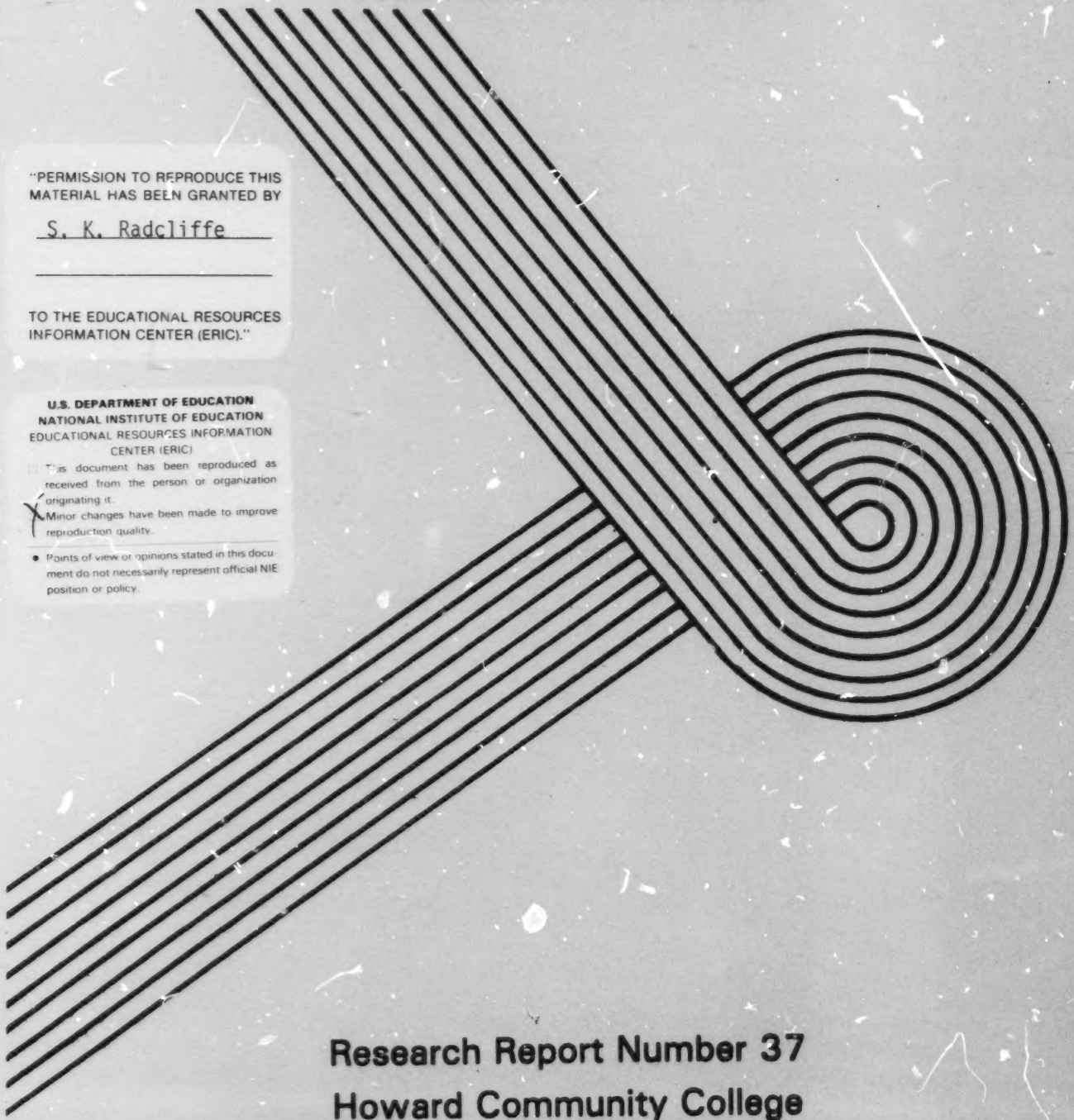

Research Report Number 37
Howard Community College
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Prepared by

Susan K. Radcliffe

Research Report Number 37

May 1984

Office of Institutional Research
Howard Community College
Columbia, Maryland

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## BRIEF SUMMARY OF RESULTS
Research Report Number 37

**TITLE:** Academic Performance of Howard Community College Students in Transfer Institutions: Preliminary Findings

**AUTHOR:** Susan K. Radcliffe, Office of Institutional Research

**PURPOSE:** To provide an overview of the performance of Howard Community College students at transfer institutions, primarily within the state of Maryland. This is an interim report presenting the preliminary findings of two major research projects which are still underway.

More specifically, the purpose of this and two subsequent projects is to examine closely four important factors related to the transfer success of Howard Community College students. These are: (1) earning an A.A. degree from Howard Community College, (2) enrollment in a community college transfer program, (3) length of time spent at Howard Community College, and (4) academic preparation and achievement at the time of community college entry.

**METHOD:** Data were provided by the Maryland State Board for Community Colleges (SBCC), the Maryland State College Information Center, and the state colleges and universities which detailed grade point averages for groups of former Howard Community College students who have transferred. In addition, a statewide report, "The Role of Community Colleges in Preparing Students for Transfer" was considered.

**FINDINGS:** Howard Community College transfer students at the University of Maryland at College Park (UMCP), the University of Maryland in Baltimore County (UMBC), Towson State University and the University of Baltimore have increased dramatically since 1980.

Howard Community College prepares its students well for transfer to four-year institutions. At the University of Maryland, for example, Howard Community College transfer students as a group, examined over a period of years, do almost as well as the overall student populations at UMCP.

Preliminary findings indicate that Howard Community College graduates are more successful than non-graduates at the University of Maryland in College Park.

Also at UMCP, Howard Community College transfer students with 50 or more credits transferred from Howard Community College were more successful than those who transferred fewer than 50 credits from Howard Community College.

The highest grade point averages for Howard Community College transfer students are found at the University of Baltimore. Over 80 percent of these transfer students have earned A.A. degrees or 50 or more credits at Howard Community College.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research report is to provide a preliminary overview of the quality of Howard Community College's preparation of its transfer curricula students for academic success in four-year institutions, primarily within the state of Maryland. This is a long-term project requiring more detailed information from the four-year institutions as well as completion of a major study still underway (see discussion of the 1982 Entrants Study below). The current report will attempt to clarify some of the issues and present some preliminary hypotheses and supporting data.

## II. HYPOTHESIS AND ISSUES

The guiding research hypothesis for this and the two subsequent studies is that there are at least four important factors related to the transfer success of Howard Community College students which should be examined in detail. These are: (1) earning an A.A. degree from Howard Community College; (2) enrollment in a community college transfer program; (3) length of time spent at Howard Community College; and (4) academic preparation and achievement at the time of community college entry.

The four factors listed above are not intended as a complete list of all factors related to the transfer success of community college students. There are many more variables related to academic success than could be examined in any one study. A number of other important variables are discussed in a recent statewide report, The Maryland Experience: The Role of Community Colleges in Preparing Students for Transfer (McConochie, 1983).

Both the statewide report mentioned above and the current study are part of an effort by community college educators to understand and explain some of the many factors involved in transfer success. These efforts are, in part, a response to Breneman and Nelson's Financing Community Colleges: An Economic Perspective (Breneman and Nelson, 1981). The Breneman study suggested that the majority of students would have a better chance of earning a bachelor's degree if they spent their first year at a four-year school. However, the Breneman study failed to take into account many variables which influence academic success, including the four factors which will be the subject of the Howard Community College studies.

## III. METHODOLOGY

Data were provided by the Maryland State Board for Community Colleges (SBCC), the Maryland State College Information Center, and the state colleges and universities. These data reports consisted of actual grade point averages and academic standing of former Howard Community College students who have transferred. Follow-up studies of Howard Community College graduates and entrants were also reviewed. In addition, a statewide report, "The Role of Community Colleges in Preparing Students for Transfer" was considered.

A continuing problem with analyzing these data is that typically the four-year colleges and universities provide grade point average or academic standing of all transfer students from Howard Community College regardless of whether they have graduated from Howard Community College,

how many credits they have earned as community college students and whether they had been enrolled in a community college transfer program or an occupational program. An exception to this is the University of Baltimore, which provided more detailed information, and the UMCP Office of Institutional Studies which provided the grade point averages of 1982 graduates. Both institutions have offered to provide the further data needed to complete the current studies.

## IV. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Increasing numbers of students are transferring from Howard Community College to Maryland public four-year institutions, in spite of the fact that the total number of community college transfer students throughout the state has been decreasing. The largest numbers of Howard Community College transfer students go on to the University of Maryland at College Park (UMCP) or the University of Maryland at Baltimore County (UMBC). Many students also select Towson State University and the University of Baltimore. Other state colleges are the next most frequent selection. Table I shows the number of transfer students from Howard Community College and the four-year institutions they selected.

Howard Community College prepares its students well for transfer to four-year institutions. At the Unversity of Maryland, for example, Howard Community College transfer students as a group, examined over a period of years, do almost as well as the overall student population at UMCP (see Table II). Data on these tables are actual grade point averages provided by the four-year institutions and not by student surveys.

Tables III, IV, V and VI show Howard Community College transfer students' accomplishments, in grade point averages and/or academic standing at the University of Maryland Baltimore County (III), Towson State University (IV), the University of Baltimore (V), and Frostburg State College (VI).

Table VII is a first attempt at showing some of the differences in transfer students' achievements at four-year institutions depending on some of the four factors under examination in this study. Table VII shows a difference in grade point average as well as in the percent in good standing among four groups of Howard Community College transfer students: (1) students with fewer than 50 credits transferred from Howard Community College, (2) students with 50 or more credits transferred, (3) Howard Community College 1982 graduates, and (4) all HCC transfer students. As Table VII shows, the students with fewer than 50 credits have the lowest GPA, the group with 50 or more credits have a somewhat higher GPA, and the 1982 graduates have the highest GPA (2.792). The overall GPA for all HCC transfer students is somewhere in the middle (2.422).

Tables V, and IX show a similar relationship for Howard Community College transfer students at the University of Baltimore, although in a different way. University of Baltimore students have by far the highest grade point average of HCC transfer students. The overall GPA for Fall 1983 was 3.084. This can be shown to be related to these students' preparation at Howard Community College. The University of Baltimore is a senior institution, so students are required to earn an A.A. degree or

equivalent of the first two years of college before transferring (although Table IX shows that some do succeed in beginning there without the required prerequisites). In fact, 83 percent of the Howard Community College transfer students do have the A.A. degree or at least 50 earned credit hours. This preparation is reflected in the high GPA at the University of Baltimore.

## V. DISCUSSION

The current report nas combined data in various ways in order to begin a more detailed and comprehensive look at the academic success of Howard Community College transfer students. Four factors have been under consideration: (1) the A.A. degree, (2) Howard Community College program of study, (3) length of time at Howard Community College, and (4) academic preparation at the time of community college entry.

The first two factors are the community college curriculum and degree attainment. Students who graduate from Howard Community College transfer programs (Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Education, Engineering, and General Studies when properly advised) appear, as expected, to be more successful as transfer students than those who did not earn an A.A. degree at Howard Community College or who were enrolled in occupational programs, such as Construction Technology, Data Processing or Secretarial Science, because these programs were designed for a different purpose. (Appendix A lists Howard Community College transfer and occupational programs.)

A third part of the initial hypothesis was that students who stay at

Howard Community College long enough to earn 50 or more credits in transfer programs, are more successful than those who earned fewer than 50 credits (the exact cutoff point is arbitrary; it could be 48 credits or 52, for example) and more successful than those who were enrolled in occupational programs. The preliminary data on UMCP and the University of Baltimore also appears to lend support to this part of the hypothesis.

A fourth factor though, to be related to transfer success, is students' level of academic preparation and achievement at the time they enter Howard Community College. The 1982 Entrants Follow-Up Study, now in progress, will be the first major attempt to take this important variable into account in measuring the transfer success of Howard Community College students. Examples of what may be learned from this study include a possible exception to the major hypothesis. It is possible, for example, that a certain group of academically mature and capable students transfer early and do well because they require very little community college preparation; these students may leave Howard Community College when they have accomplished their own individual goals, often with advice from faculty or counselors. At the other end of the spectrum, students who enter Howard at the developmental level (they are required to take pre-college level developmental courses before entering the first college courses), may be totally unprepared for transfer unless they complete an A.A. degree in a transfer curriculum.

Another group to consider are the many students who enroll in community college occupational programs and later decide to transfer. Occupational programs are designed to prepare students for careers, not for transfer

to four-year institutions. Community colleges, including Howard, recognize that students change their minds and do everything they can to help these students transfer. Many of these students are successful in transferring, but they cannot anticipate finding themselves as well prepared for transfer programs. In addition, it is not reasonable or justifiable, from a research point of view, to judge the quality of Howard Community College's transfer preparation if these students are included with the students who have graduated from transfer programs. Yet this is exactly what has been done because of a lack of the appropriate data.

In other words, it has been very difficult to assess how well Howard Community College has performed its transfer preparation function because the available data has not distinguished between community college graduates and non-graduates; it has not distinguished between students from community college transfer programs and students from occupational programs; and in most cases it has not distinguished between students with many community college credits and those with few community college credits.

This report has demonstrated some support for four research hypotheses under study as well as the need for continued study of these important issues.

## VI. CONTINUING RESEARCH

There are two important pieces of research underway to examine the issue of transfer preparation in greater detail.

A. Requests have been made for more data from the four-year institutions concerning transfer students' academic standing along with information about their community college program and degree status. These data will be analyzed and presented in a subsequent report.

B. The 1982 Entrants Follow-Up, a study of all students who entered Howard Community College in the fall of 1982, is now being conducted. This study will identify the most able groups of students as well as developmental students by program area, and will survey all students who can be contacted. Some will still be enrolled at Howard Community College while others will have transferred or will be working full-time. The study will evaluate the effectiveness of their education at Howard Community College.

## TABLE I

HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER STUDENTS'
MOST FREQUENTLY CHOSEN STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

| University or College | Fall 1980 | Fall 1981 | Fall 1982 | Fall 1983 | Increase Number | Increase Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Frostburg | 24 | 30 | 36 | 38 | 14 | 58.3 |
| Towson | 70 | 87 | 104 | 132 | 62 | 88.6 |
| Univ. of Baltimore | 88 | 110 | 138 | 149 | 39 | 35.5 |
| UMCP | 88 | 101 | 114 | 142 | 54 | 61.4 |
| UMBC | 38 | 50 | 63 | 61 | 23 | 61 |
| TOTAL | 308 | 378 | 455 | 544 | 236 | 76.6 |

## TABLE II

GRADE POINT AVERAGES AND ACADEMIC STANDING OF
HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER STUDENTS AT UMCP

| Year | Semester | Students | Mean GPA | Percent Good Standing |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1976-1977 | Fall | 73 | 2.62 | 86 |
| | Spring | 65 | 2.62 | 81 |
| 1977-1978 | Fall | 81 | 2.59 | 83 |
| | Spring | 74 | 2.66 | 86 |
| 1978-1979 | Fall | 73 | 2.70 | 82 |
| | Spring | 72 | 2.62 | 72 |
| 1979-1980 | Fall | 79 | 2.53 | 84 |
| | Spring | 73 | 2.59 | 80 |
| 1980-1981 | Fall | 88 | 2.51 | 80 |
| | Spring | 91 | 2.61 | 76 |
| 1981-1982 | Fall | 101 | 2.49 | 76 |
| | Spring | 97 | 2.67 | 89 |
| 1982-1983 | Fall | 114 | 2.60 | 77 |
| | Spring | 112 | - | 78 |
| 1983-1984 | Fall | 142 | 2.42 | 73 |
| | Spring | 129 | 2.50 | - |

## TABLE III

ACADEMIC STANDING OF HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
TRANSFER STUDENTS AT UMBC

| Year | Semester | Students | Mean GPA | Percent Good Standing |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1979-1980 | Fall | 33 | - | 73 |
| | Spring | 35 | - | 77 |
| 1980-1981 | Fall | 38 | - | 90 |
| | Spring | 32 | - | 88 |
| 1981-1982 | Fall | 50 | - | 74 |
| | Spring | 35 | - | - |
| 1982-1983 | Fall | 63 | - | 91 |
| | Spring | 61 | - | 80 |
| 1983-1984 | Fall | 83 | - | 79 |

## TABLE IV

HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER STUDENTS
AT TOWSON STATE UNVERSITY
1972-1983

Cumulative GPA at Towson - 2.506
GPA Range - 1.500-3.250

| Year | Semester | Students | Avg. GPA | Cumulative Students | Cumulative Avg. GPA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1972-1973 | Fall | 1 | 3.190 | 1 | 3.190 |
| | Spring | 2 | 2.370 | 3 | 2.643 |
| 1973-1974 | Fall | 4 | 3.172 | 7 | 2.945 |
| | Spring | 1 | 3.000 | 8 | 2.952 |
| 1974-1975 | Fall | 2 | 2.640 | 10 | 2.890 |
| | Spring | 3 | 3.000 | 13 | 2.915 |
| 1975-1976 | Fall | 11 | 2.782 | 24 | 2.854 |
| | Spring | 1 | 3.000 | 25 | 2.860 |
| 1976-1977 | Fall | 13 | 2.735 | 38 | 2.817 |
| | Spring | | | | |
| 1977-1978 | Fall | 9 | 2.573 | 47 | 2.770 |
| | Spring | 1 | 1.500 | 48 | 2.744 |
| 1978-1979 | Fall | 9 | 2.740 | 57 | 2.743 |
| | Spring | 1 | 1.500 | 58 | 2.722 |
| 1979-1980 | Fall | 6 | 2.071 | 64 | 2.661 |
| | Spring | 2 | 2.635 | 66 | 2.660 |
| 1980-1981 | Fall | 4 | 3.250 | 70 | 2.694 |
| | Spring | 3 | 3.177 | 73 | 2.714 |
| 1981-1982 | Fall | 14 | 2.349 | 87 | 2.655 |
| | Spring | 3 | 1.700 | 90 | 2.623 |
| 1982-1983 | Fall | 14 | 2.276 | 104 | 2.576 |
| | Spring | 6 | 1.915 | 110 | 2.540 |
| 1983-1984 | Fall | 22 | 2.335 | 132 | 2.506 |

## TABLE V

HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER STUDENTS
AT THE UNVERSITY OF BALTIMORE
1975-1983

Cumulative GPA at the Unversity of Baltimore - 3.084
GPA Range - 2.328-3.900

| Year | Semester | Students | Avg. GPA | Cumulative Students | Cumulative Avg. GPA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1975-1976 | Fall | 2 | 3.900 | 3 | 3.933 |
| | Spring | 2 | 3.000 | 5 | 3.560 |
| 1976-1977 | Fall | 6 | 2.938 | 12 | 3.244 |
| | Spring | 3 | 3.066 | 15 | 3.208 |
| 1977-1978 | Fall | 8 | 3.160 | 29 | 3.195 |
| | Spring | 3 | 2.766 | 32 | 3.155 |
| 1978-1979 | Fall | 11 | 2.958 | 46 | 3.097 |
| | Spring | 4 | 3.105 | 50 | 3.098 |
| 1979-1980 | Fall | 9 | 2.946 | 65 | 3.122 |
| | Spring | 7 | 3.001 | 72 | 3.110 |
| 1980-1981 | Fall | 13 | 3.271 | 88 | 3.101 |
| | Spring | 4 | 3.208 | 92 | 3.106 |
| 1981-1982 | Fall | 9 | 2.976 | 110 | 3.102 |
| | Spring | 8 | 2.839 | 118 | 3.084 |
| 1982-1983 | Fall | 20 | 3.293 | 138 | 3.114 |
| | Spring | 4 | 2.988 | 142 | 3.110 |
| 1983-1984 | Fall | 6 | 2.328 | 149 | 3.084 |

## TABLE VI

HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER STUDENTS
AT FROSTBURG STATE COLLEGE
1971-1983

Cumulative GPA at Frostburg State College - 2.498
GPA Range - 1.380-3.600

| Year (Fall) | Students | Avg. GPA | Cumulative Students | Cumulative Avg. GPA |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1971 | 1 | 1.720 | 1 | 1.720 |
| 1972 | 1 | 3.600 | 2 | 2.660 |
| 1973 | 1 | 1.380 | 3 | 2.233 |
| 1974 | 2 | 2.295 | 5 | 2.258 |
| 1975 | 1 | 1.670 | 6 | 2.160 |
| 1976 | 3 | 2.553 | 9 | 2.291 |
| 1977 | 3 | 3.500 | 13 | 2.643 |
| 1978 | | | | |
| 1979 | 3 | 2.610 | 18 | 2.566 |
| 1980 | 6 | 2.208 | 24 | 2.477 |
| 1981 | 6 | 2.950 | 30 | 2.572 |
| 1982 | 6 | 2.143 | 36 | 2.501 |
| 1983 | 1 | 2.670 | 38 | 2.498 |

## TABLE VII

INFLUENCE OF HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
EDUCATION ON TRANSFER GRADES AT UMCP
(Based on Fall 1983 Grades at UMCP)

| | Enrolled | Avg. GPA | Good Standing Number | Good Standing Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Less than 50 HCC Credits | 86 | 2.284 | 62 | 72.1 |
| 50 or more HCC Credits | 50 | 2.563 | 40 | 80.0 |
| HCC Graduates (1982) | 12 | 2.792 | 10 | 83.3 |
| All HCC Transfers to UMCP | 142 | 2.422 | 104 | 73.0 |
| All UMCP Undergraduates | 29564 | Upper* 2.80<br>Lower** 2.47 | 24538 | 83.0 |

* Upper division UMCP courses
**Lower division UMCP courses

## TABLE VIII

1982 HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE GRADUATES
TRANSFER GRADES AT UMCP*

| | N | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Below 2.02 | 2 | 16.7 |
| 2 - 2.4 | 2 | 16.7 |
| 2.5 - 2.9 | 4 | 33.3 |
| 3.0 - 3.4 | 1 | 8.3 |
| 3.5 or above | 3 | 25.0 |
| TOTAL | 12 | 100.0 |
| % above 2.5 | 8 | 66.7 |

*Based on actual GPA reports from UMCP, as are all tables.

## TABLE IX

HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE PREPARATION OF
UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE TRANSFER STUDENTS

| Earned At Howard Community College | Students | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| A.A. Degree | 25 | 48.1 |
| 50+ Credits | 18 | 34.6 |
| 40 - 50 Credits | 2 | 3.8 |
| 30 or Fewer Credits | 7 | 13.5 |
| TOTAL | 52 | 100.0 |

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## APPENDIX A

HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER AND OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAMS

Transfer Programs

Arts and Sciences (Includes Art, Computer Science, Music, Science and many other majors.)

Business Administration (Includes Accounting transfer major and Information Systems Management.)

Engineering

Teacher Education

General Studies (When student is properly advised)

Occupational Programs

Accounting

Biomedical Engineering Technology

Business Management

Construction Technology and Carpentry

Data Processing

Electronics Technology

Housing Management

Nursing

Plant Science

Retailing

Secretarial Science

Vision Care

UNIVERSITY OF BALTIMORE CHARLES AT MOUNT ROYAL BALTIMORE MARYLAND 21201 (301) 625-3349

UofB

APPENDIX B

OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS

November 17, 1983

Mr. Vladimir G. Marinich
Chair, Business Division
Howard Community College
Little Patuxent Parkway
Columbia, Md 21044

Dear Vlad:

It was good to see you again last month. As promised, I have attached the Fall, 1983 update of Howard Community College students enrolled at the University of Baltimore. Forty-four of 55 students are in business programs. This includes 7 who are new to our business programs this fall.

Grade point averages for Howard students by program are as follows:

| | Howard Student GPA's | | Avg. U.ofB. Student GPA's | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Fall '82 | Fall '83 | Fall '82 | Fall '83 |
| Accounting | 3.02 | 3.18 | 2.8 | 2.87 |
| Business Administration | 2.63 | 3.09 | 2.59 | 2.54 |
| Finance | | 2.69 | -- | 2.75 |
| Marketing | 2.86 | 2.8 | 2.59 | 3.31 |
| Personnel | 2.9 | 2.81 | 3.16 | 2.74 |
| Admin. for Nurses | 3.88 | 3.56 | 3.21 | 3.02 |
| Management | 2.42 | 3.22 | 2.57 | 2.54 |
| Data Processing | -- | 3.83 | 2.76 | 2.69 |

These averages, of course, do not include those for students new this fall.

I hope this information continues to be of interest to you. Your students continue to do quite well at the UofB. I have enclosed several scholarship applications should you want to nominate any students with at least a 3.0 G.P.A.

I hope all continues well for you this semester. See you in the Spring!

Sincerely,

Clare E. Angelozzi
Associate Director of Recruitment

CEA/ss

Howard Community College
Research Publications


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